

REMARKS

Applicant has amended the claims to more clearly claim and point out that the linking regions are inwardly bowed as stated in paragraph [0069] of the specification.

The Examiner has cited U.S. Pat. No. 5,890,610 to Jansen et al. (hereafter "Jansen") pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipating claim 1 of the present application. Specifically, the Examiner states that Jansen teaches a fast fit assembly having a collar and that the collar has an array of elements which move radially outwardly and bias against a container to capture a neck flange.

However, Jansen does not teach or suggest the utilization of inwardly bowed linking regions that are connected to form the resilient collar as is claimed by the present invention. Nor does Jansen teach or suggest that the collar itself is resilient and capable of being deformed as is claimed in the present application.

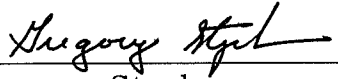
The collar in Jansen is essentially rigid without deformable inwardly bowed linking regions. Jansen's collar has a plurality of individual extensions that can be manipulated to accept a necked container. However, these extensions do not render the collar itself resilient or deformable. Nor do the extensions include inwardly bowed linking regions.

Thus, Jansen does not read on claim 1 as amended since it does not teach or suggest specific claimed elements such as an array of inwardly bowed linking regions. Nor is there any equivalent disclosed by Jansen that would equate to an array of inwardly bowed linking regions.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102 (b) rejections based on Jansen.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 5/15/08


Gregory Stephens
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 41,329
Williams Mullen
PO Box 12109
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2109
(Tel) 919.981.4318
gstephens@williamsmullen.com